

Amendments to the Specification:

On page 1, after the title, please insert the following:

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. FIELD OF THE INVENTION

On page 1, between the first and second full paragraphs (line 10), please insert the following:

2. DESCRIPTION OF THE RELATED ART

The ends of a conventional protection device for protecting products that are sensitive to contamination are generally closed by leaktight walls, and the air gap created between the wall and the adjoining end of the device constitutes a risk zone where inductions of contaminated ambient air may occur. The induction of contaminated ambient air produced by suction, consists of a flow of contaminated air directed toward the worktop where the sensitive products are arranged. This contaminated air flow then mixes with the sterile air stream diffused by the protection device and pollutes it.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

On page 2, please delete the second full paragraph (lines 7-17).

On page 2, please replace the third full paragraph (lines 19-35) with the following rewritten paragraph:

To alleviate ~~this~~ the drawback of conventional protection devices discussed previously, the present invention proposes a novel device for the close protection of products arranged on a worktop such as a conveyor, which are sensitive to contamination from the ambient environment, by diffusion of a sterile air stream in a direction substantially perpendicular or parallel to said worktop, said device extending along said worktop and having at least one end adjoining a wall so that there is an air gap between said end and said wall, characterized in that said end is formed by a porous wall made of a perforated

material, extending substantially perpendicularly to the longitudinal axis of said device, in such a way as to create in said gap a sterile air leakage directed outward away from the worktop, this sterile air leakage countering any ambient air induction into said gap toward said worktop.

On page 6, after the second full paragraph (line 33), please insert the following:

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

On page 7, before the first full paragraph (line 12), please insert the following:

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

On page 10 (amended sheet), before the first full paragraph (before line 6), please insert the following:

The perforated flexible material constituting the porous lower longitudinal wall of said end walls 102a of the sheaths 101, 102 and 103 is a synthetic fabric such as polypropylene or polyester fabric.

On page 10 (amended sheet), please replace the first full paragraph (lines 6-11) with the following:

For worktops or conveyors of large length, there may be good cause to prolong each of the three juxtaposed flexible sheaths by abutting another similar sheath 102 with each sheath 102 aligned therewith (see figure 1, which shows a first embodiment of the invention). The two aligned sheaths 102 have no mechanical fixing therebetween.

On page 10 (amended sheet), please replace the fifth full paragraph (lines 31-36) with the following:

Provision may also be made for the two adjoining end walls 102a, 102b of the two aligned sheaths 102 to be formed by porous walls made of a perforated flexible material. Two leakages of sterile air outward away from the worktop [[1]] 12 are thus created in said air gap 1, countering any induction of contaminated air thereinto.

On page 11 (amended sheet), please replace the fourth full paragraph (lines 20-22) with the following paragraphs:

On each longitudinal edge of the worktop 12, a ventilation nozzle 201 has an end 201a adjoining an outlet wall 10 of a machine, for example an oven, which here has an aperture 11 opening onto the worktop 12, here a conveyor.

An air gap 1 is then also created between each end 201a of each nozzle and said wall.

To avoid an induction of contaminated air into this air gap 1, each end 201a of each ventilation nozzle 201 is formed by a porous wall made of a perforated material. This porous wall has a length of around 10 cm (see figure 3).

In particular, the end wall 201a of each ventilation nozzle 201 and the upper part 202a and lower part 202b of the air diffuser 202 are made from perforated sheet of like porosity.

On page 13 (amended sheet), before the first full paragraph (before line 4), please insert the following:

flow whose velocity of diffusion exhibits a component normal to the worktop.

On page 14 (amended sheet), please replace the third full paragraph (lines 16-23) with the following paragraphs:

Represented in figure 7 is a cubicle 300 positioned above the worktop 12, supplied with sterile air through a duct 303 which opens into the cubicle through its leaktight upper wall. This cubicle 300 has a porous lower wall 301 for diffusing sterile air in a vertical direction substantially perpendicular to the worktop 12, said porous wall 301 being made from a perforated sheet and exhibiting a profile such that it ensures a central diffusion of sterile air at low velocity bordered on each side by a diffusion of sterile air at high velocity. An end of the cubicle 300 adjoins an outlet wall 10 of a machine. Here this outlet wall 10 comprises an aperture 11 opening into the worktop 12. This end is formed by a wall comprising at least one porous zone 302 made of perforated material extending over the entire width of said cubicle 300 and rising from the lower edge of said cubicle 300 to a certain determined height here of the order of 25 mm.

Furthermore, the cubicle 300 is prolonged axially by another identical cubicle 300 which is abutted with the first cubicle without mechanical fixing with the latter.